MEMORIAL SERVICE (HANDOUT)

COMMANDER:
"Camp, attention."
"Parade, rest!"

"Brothers, we have met here to consign to that house prepared for all the living, the memory of a soldier of this country, John E. Wilkins, of Terre Haute, Indiana. The march of this soldier is over. Let us remember Comrade Wilkins here at rest under the blue skies of Heaven, guarded by the silent stars that in life watched over him when he bivouacked on the battlefields or lay down weary and foot-sore on the soil of the Southland. May we, as we stand here by this grave remember that it is our duty to honor the memory of the men who stood shoulder to shoulder on the bloody fields of battle, who guarded so faithfully, so honestly and so well the sacred bonds of Statehood and who fought for liberty and the dear old Flag. They have passed away to their final review and upon us has devolved by sacred right of heritage the duty of perpetuating the principles for which they fought."

"May we not forget as the years roll on that we too shall have battles to fight, that in time we too shall be carried to the silent city of the dead and that our lives here should but fit us for the great bivouac of Eternity."

"The Chaplain will invoke the Divine Blessing."

CHAPLAIN:

"God of battles and peace. Ruler of the destinies of countries and of men. In this silent camping ground of the dead we come before Thee asking Thy blessing as we honor the memory of this defender of our country's honor, John E. Wilkins. Wilt Thou in Thy infinite tenderness comfort those who mourn him. Wilt thou speak words of comfort and consolation to their sorrowing hearts. Look in mercy we pray Thee, upon the widows and orphans of deceased veterans everywhere. Bless and save from every evil the country for which this soldier and our fathers fought. Preserve it in purity and integrity. Bless those present who have gathered here in response to the call of love and duty, to perform these rites of remembrance over one of our Nation's preservers, and at last grant that we may all meet before Thy throne and to Thy name shall we ascribe praise both now and forever. Amen."

(All) "Amen."

COMMANDER:

"As we remember John E. Wilkins, let us cherish his example as a patriot and defender of those principles he believed to be right. Let us forget his failings, for he was human, remembering only his virtues. Let us so live that when that time shall come those we may leave behind may say above our graves, here lies the body of a true hearted, brave and earnest defender of the Republic!'"

"Officer of the Day, let the guard of honor set up the symbol of the army, and let a soldier be detailed to guard it."

FIRST BROTHER: (laying a wreath of evergreen upon the grave)

"On behalf of all present, I give this tribute, a symbol of an undying love for the comrades of the war."

SECOND BROTHER: (laying a single rose upon the grave)

"Symbol of purity, we offer at this lowly grave a rose. May future generations emulate the unselfish devotion of even the lowliest of our heroes."

THIRD BROTHER: (laying a wreath of grapevine upon the grave)

"As the last token of affection, we crown these remains with the symbol of victory!"

COMMANDER: (stepping forward and laying a small American flag upon the grave)

"On behalf of the American Legion and all present, for whose integrity and unity our late Comrade John E. Wilkins offered his services during the War of the Rebellion, I deposit this flag."

CHAPLAIN:

"It seems well we should leave Comrade (veteran's last name here) to rest in honor where over him will bend the arching sky, as it did in great love when he pitched his tent, or lay down, weary and footsore, by the way or on the battlefield for an hour's sleep. As he was then so he is still - in the hands of the Heavenly Father. Let us also then remember those honored dead who did not return to hearth and home, but lie in resting places known but to God.

The Unknown Dead

Above their rest there is no sound of weeping,
Only the voice of song-birds thrills the air;
Unknown their graves, yet they are in God's keeping,
There are none 'missing' from His tender care.
He knows each hallowed mound, and at His pleasure
Marshalls the sentinels of earth and sky;
O'er their repose kind Nature heaps her treasure,
Fanned by soft winds which 'round them gently sigh.
Bravely they laid their all upon the altar,
Counting as naught the sacrifice and pain,
Theirs but to do and die without a falter —
Ours to enjoy the victory and the gain.
They are not lost; that only which was mortal

Lies 'neath the turf o'er arched by Southern skies;
Deathless they wait beyond the heavenly portal,
In that fair land where valor never dies.
In the great heart of coming generations
Their fame shall live, their glory never cease;
Even when comes to all earth's troubled nations
God's perfect gift of universal peace.
He that loses his life for My sake shall find it.

SALUTE (Three volleys by Am Legion color guard, joined by Re-enactors on third volley)

TAPS

CHAPLAIN:

"May the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost and the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, rest upon and abide with us forever. Amen."

COMMANDER:

"Our service of dedication is ended. I thank you, for your courtesy in permitting us, who are bound by special ties to them, to honor our dead. Taps are sounded - Lights are out - the Soldier sleeps."

Dismiss the Camp.